



BETTER BENEFITS – MORE CHOICES

Good News about the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003!

Hospice Provisions in the new Medicare Modernization Act:

❖ **Nurse Practitioners:**

The new Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) will allow nurse practitioners to serve as the attending physicians for patients who elect the hospice benefit. The nurse practitioners will not be permitted to certify the terminal diagnosis. A medical doctor must certify this diagnosis.

❖ **Rural Hospice Demonstration Project:**

The Medicare Modernization Act will require CMS to conduct a demonstration project to test delivery of hospice care in rural areas under which Medicare beneficiaries without a caregiver at home may receive care in a facility of 20 or fewer beds. The 20-bed (or fewer) facility will not be required to offer hospice services in the community or comply with the 20 percent limit on inpatient days.

❖ **Hospice Consultation Services:**

The MMA creates coverage for a hospice one-time consultation service for a terminally ill individual who has not yet elected the hospice benefit. This consultation may include evaluations of the patient's need for pain management, symptom management, and care options. The amount paid to the hospice will be equal to the payment under the physician fee schedule for an evaluation and management visit for problems of moderate severity and requiring medical decision making of low complexity.

❖ **Use of Arrangements to Provide Core Hospice Services:**

The MMA authorizes use of arrangements with other hospice programs to provide core hospice services in certain exigent or extraordinary circumstances. The new law also allows hospices to contract for highly specialized services.